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Editorial Foreword

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THE child has been called the last serf of civilization. Instead of the earliest objective of the efforts for human betterment, as one might expect because of the fundamental character of the parental instinct—the root of all tenderness—he has been the most recent. For centuries, instinct and reason failed to develop an adequate regard for childhood. From St. Augustine to Jonathan Edwards, the doctrine of child depravity was held and practised, leading to insidious cruelty, or abnormal repression, or indifference at best—this, despite the lofty conceptions of childhood proclaimed by the Great Galilean.¹

EVOLUTION OF THE SOCIAL BETTERMENT MOVEMENT

Each succeeding stage in the evolution of the modern movement for social betterment has carried the emphasis nearer to the inception of life. This may be seen best in a review of its development in England, where it first became an organized movement, definite and self-conscious. Springing out of a new recognition of the eternal worth of individuality, which made its appearance almost co-incident with modern industry, naturally such a movement concerned itself with the immediate task in hand, which it found in the conditions obtaining in the newly created industrial centers. Thus it began largely as a sanitary effort to clear away the filth in city streets, to look after their lighting, cleaning and polic-

ing, and to create proper drainage systems.²

The next step followed speedily as social intelligence appreciated the human problem beyond the processes of sanitation. The era of factory legislation followed. Hours of labor were regulated, especially for women and children; certain dangerous and unhealthy occupations were forbidden; and many similar matters were brought under state inspection.

Valuable as such gains were, they were negative and perhaps, it began to be suspected, too late. A further advance was seen to be necessary. The requirements of the experiment in modern democracy came, too, to emphasize the necessity of an earlier and more positive program. The training and education of future citizens began to be recognized as imperative. The last third of the nineteenth century saw, throughout western civilization, the acceptance of the theory of public education for children. The twentieth century is witnessing the actual application of this theory and the working out of its details and implications.

No sooner were children gathered together in large numbers, at public command and under public auspices, than a host of problems, ever increasing in number and recognized importance, forced themselves upon the social attention, until gradually, out of this consideration of countless children and their needs, there emerged childhood as the chief concern and the main empha-

¹ Arnold and Beatrice Gesell, *The Normal Child and Primary Education*, Ginn and Company, New York, 1912, p. 1.

² Havelock Ellis, *The Task of Social Hygiene*, Houghton Mifflin Company, New York, 1913, p. 4.

sis in the present day social welfare movement. In fact, this emphasis has taken many social students and workers to a point where adults are considered of significance largely as a means to an end. And that end is better, healthier, happier children. The twentieth century is the century of the child.

FACTORS IN THE EMANCIPATION OF THE CHILD

Among the factors that have combined to elevate the child to the pedestal of its present importance, two may be considered to be of primary importance. They are the rise of modern humanitarianism and the development of modern science.

1. The Modern Humanitarian Movement. It is impossible, of course, to fix upon any year, epoch or century for the birth of humanitarianism. It is as old as man's inhumanity. There seems to be, however, considerable agreement that humanitarianism has extended greatly in its range during the last century, an extension paralleled, suggestively enough, by a marked increase in human interdependence in the course of social evolution. Witness the decrease in severity in the treatment of criminals, the abolition of human slavery, increased interest in the welfare of the poor, the improved status of women, protection of animals from cruelty—a somewhat arbitrary miscellany of illustrations to be sure. The interesting fact in this connection is not that the modern humanitarian movement should have reacted favorably upon the conditions of childhood, but that such reactions were so slow in making themselves manifest. Societies for the prevention of cruelty to children developed subsequent to, and in many cases quite incidental to, societies for the prevention of cruelty to animals!

2. The Development of Modern Science. More vital than modern

humanitarianism to a true appreciation of the importance of the child has been the development of modern science. The history of science is the story of its progressive application to an ever wider range of phenomena. In time, following its application to the inorganic world, it entered the field of organic activities, not without opposition however, and the biological sciences developed—Zoölogy, Botany, Physiology, Anatomy, Biology and Psychology. The development of the science of Psychology, particularly in its genetic aspects, meant much for a better appreciation and understanding of the importance of childhood, due very largely to the leadership and the influence of G. Stanley Hall, President and Professor in Psychology at Clark University. Still later, as the nineteenth century was drawing to a close, came the application of science to the field of human relationships, and the social sciences appeared to claim membership in the scientific guild.

Social science has brought about a new recognition of the child chiefly as a result of the new ideal in social work which it evolved. Professor Ross, of the University of Wisconsin, writing more than a decade ago, aptly summarized this ideal as well as the background of its development in the following words:

Within ten years a wonderful hopefulness has entered the hearts of social workers. They have not been giving all their time to helping the human wrecks that file in endless procession before them. They have done a little exploring. They have followed up the feeders of this river of human misery, the origin of which has been as much shrouded in darkness as the sources of the Nile. They have located some of the principal springs of evil and, to their wonder, they are not defects of human nature at all but "adverse conditions"—that can be removed. Hence they are beginning to tell us that poverty is as curable as tuberculosis.

They insist that most of the sources of crime can be stopped up. There is growing enthusiasm for constructive policies. One of the great organizations possessed by the new idea has taken as its motto, "Better a fence at the top of the precipice than an ambulance at the bottom."³

The development of the ideal of prevention inevitably caused social workers to turn to the child. The "fence at the top of the precipice" must needs be built as early in life as possible. Mangold in his book on child welfare, published seven years ago, emphasizes the significance of this ideal for social work in these words:

In modern social work the emphasis has been shifted from the parent to the child. The fact that this is so is due largely to the belief in the principle, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." Not relief but prevention is the slogan of modern social work; not palliatives but fundamental social reforms are demanded today. It is well then to begin with the child, for he presages the coming man. He is the plastic material that can be molded ill or well; he is gigantic in possibilities, but dwarfed if without opportunity. We are beginning to realize that the more time and energy that are spent on the child, the more lasting and profitable is the investment.

. . . Childhood is the time of preparation; afterwards little can be accomplished. Let society concentrate more of its energies on the child, instead of scattering them as it does today, and then with an equal expenditure of effort it will accomplish more good than can be realized in any other way.⁴

EMERGENCE OF THE PRESENT CHILD WELFARE MOVEMENT

Not only has the emphasis in the social welfare movement been shifting from the parent to the child, but an equally significant change in emphasis

³ Edward Alsworth Ross, *Latter Day Saints and Sinners*, B. W. Heubsch, New York, 1910, p. 46.

⁴ George B. Mangold, *Problems of Child Welfare*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1914, p. 1.

has been taking place in the child caring movement itself. The child *saving* movement of the nineteenth century has been transformed into the child *welfare* movement of the twentieth century.

In a report of the committee of the Division on Children of the National Conference of Social Work, made at the annual meeting at Kansas City in 1918, Mr. Henry Thurston, of the staff of the New York School for Social Work, summarized the important things done for children during the nineteenth century. The report includes: (1) The establishment and maintenance of separate institutions for the care of the separate classes of handicapped children found in mixed almshouses and jails, in inadequate homes and in streets or alleys—examples being found in the establishment of institutions for orphans, for the blind, the deaf, the crippled, the low grade feeble-minded and the epileptic, and in reformatories and industrial schools for delinquents; (2) the substitution, to a slight extent at least, of *placing-out* and *boarding-out* of various groups of handicapped children for the old indenture and apprenticeship systems; (3) the beginnings of separate parts of our present juvenile court system, in the form of probation and the separation of children from adults in courts and jails; (4) the establishment of societies for the prevention of cruelty to children; (5) the beginnings of compulsory school attendance; and (6) the beginnings of child labor legislation.

"In other words," concludes the committee's report, "the public or social work for children for a large part of the nineteenth century was chiefly confined to the separation from the community of class after class of the children who were specially afflicted by some outstanding handicap like

homelessness, neglect, blindness, deafness, crippled bodies, imbecile minds, delinquency, etc.”⁵

Workers engaged with these groups of handicapped children came in time, as did their fellow workers with adults, to an appreciation of the economy of preventive work. This led somewhat naturally to a consideration of the essentials of welfare upon which children of normal opportunity thrive, and this, in turn, to a consideration of such essentials for all children. “This progress has been symbolized by our changing emphasis in the use of terms. *Child Saving* had to yield a large place to *prevention*, and now both *child saving* and *prevention* are giving way to a larger and newer conception of *child welfare*.”⁶

Child welfare is coming to comprehend, then, the welfare of all children, whether specially handicapped or not. It means that “there is a child welfare minimum in our democracy that will make that democracy worth saving by insisting that every child must have his full individualized chance.”⁷ It is this interpretation of the term “child welfare” which was uppermost in the minds of the men and women who participated in the regional conferences held in 1919 under the auspices of the Federal Children’s Bureau, and drew up the first national statement of those “irreducible minimum standards for the health, education and work of the American child,” which Miss Lathrop, whose name during the years of her tenure as chief of the Federal Children’s Bureau came to be synonymous with child welfare in the United States, sets

⁵ Henry W. Thurston, “Proceedings of the National Conference of Social Work,” formerly National Conference of Charities and Correction, 45th Annual Meetings, Kansas City, 1918, pp. 48, 49.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

forth so admirably in the opening contribution to this volume.

It is this meaning of the term which is being written into the children’s codes now in process of crystallization in various of our states, for, as Mr. Clopper reminds us: “The real children’s code is democratic and recognizes no class distinction.”⁸

The first part of this volume is devoted to problems of welfare involving all children—life, health, nutrition, dental hygiene and mental hygiene. Particular attention is called to the articles dealing with the various aspects of the mental hygiene movement in its relation to child welfare, representing, as it does, an emphasis upon one very important aspect of the child welfare movement, largely neglected in former years, but now in process of receiving merited recognition. In connection with the various aspects of child welfare considered, it is to be noted that there is developing a new appreciation of the possibilities of the public school as a social agency. Accordingly, three articles dealing with suggestive aspects of this project have been included.

Part II deals with the more time-worn problems of socially handicapped children. Although the problems presented may be somewhat time-worn, their treatment most assuredly is not. The reader will find much that is new, suggestive and valuable in their discussion by the various experts who have given generously of their time and efforts to make these contributions.

Part III includes two articles devoted to the legal and administrative aspects of the child welfare movement. The first of these articles deals with the development of the children’s code, setting forth the progress that has been made thus far in the re-consideration,

⁸ Cf. “The Development of the Children’s Code” in this volume.

revision and coördination of legislation relating to the protection, care and welfare of children, and emphasizing the necessity of the preparation of a state-wide and coördinated program in the interests of our future citizens, such as the term "code" implies. The final article in the volume, by the able secretary of the Minnesota State Child Welfare Commission, presents the status of the child welfare movement in one state which has made noteworthy progress in the creation and application of such a state-wide and coördinated program.

The editor in charge is fully aware of certain gross errors, particularly of omission, in the preparation of the outline of this volume. A discussion of the transition in the modern family and the effects of modern industry upon the home, together with a consideration of their reaction upon the general problem of child welfare, would have been of

value. The omission of the entire subject of recreation as a separate division for discussion is well-nigh unpardonable. Several articles dealing with the problems of the rural child would have been very pertinent. Consideration of the philosophy of the state and its interrelations with child welfare work would have been exceedingly interesting. All of these topics were considered, but various circumstances, spatial and otherwise, combined to make their inclusion inexpedient or impossible. Unfortunately, those articles dealing with the problems of juvenile delinquency, which were scheduled to appear in this volume, were not received in time for publication. Despite these and other shortcomings of editorial architecture, it is hoped that the final result has been a volume not only of interest to the general reader but also, perhaps, of some value to the busy, skilled workers in actual grip with the problems involving the welfare of the child.